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ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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Annex

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

ISRAEL

[Original: English]

[30 October 1995]

1. Israel has advocated in the past and continues to support the concept of establishing in the Middle East, in due course, a credible and mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone, freely negotiated by all States of the region.

2. Israel's policy on the nuclear issue is based on the following principles:

(a) The first principle is comprehensiveness and the primacy of the peace process - the nuclear issue, as well as all regional security problems, conventional as well as non-conventional, should be dealt with in the full context of the peace process. It is Israel's conviction that nothing should be done to lift out the nuclear issue from the comprehensive framework of the peace negotiations and that the peace negotiations, bilateral as well as multilateral, should be respected and in no way eroded. In this regard, Israel subscribes to the statement made by the Secretary-General in his report of 25 October 1993:

> "... a nuclear-weapon-free zone cannot be conceived of or implemented in a political vacuum, separate from the process of mutual reconciliation." (A/48/399, para. 22)

(b) The second principle concerns the regional framework: regional confidence- and security-building measures, regional arms control arrangements on conventional as well as non-conventional weapons, including a nuclear-weapon-free zone, will be negotiated and achieved in due course only at the regional forum, i.e., the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security. The Working Group has achieved some tangible progress within the framework of the peace process, and Israel fully supports its activities. The decision to establish a regional communications network stands out among its achievements, as does progress made in the field of maritime cooperation; regional security centres; seminars on various issues including those of verification; threat perceptions and security concepts.

(c) The third principle is a step-by-step approach: practicality dictates beginning the process with confidence- and security-building measures.

3. There is, in our view, a necessary sequence of confidence-building measures which needs to be followed. They include measures which in the first instance do not encroach on the national security of the negotiating partners and can be established on a bilateral and multilateral basis. These are at the moment negotiated in the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security. Once agreed upon, they have to be tested over time in order to confer confidence.

Confidence-building measures of a more pervasive nature require that all States of the region abjure war in settling conflict and participate in the negotiations. Meaningful arms control negotiations, where priority is assigned to weapon systems that experience has proven to be destructive and destabilizing, can follow a proven and durable peace among the States of the region and reconciliation among the peoples of the region. These conditions do not exist as yet.

4. Indeed, the study annexed to the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session (A/45/435) stated, in paragraphs 110 and 151, that prior to peace, confidence needs to be generated:

> "110. ... Confidence must be built on all sides: ... confidence that military solutions to political problems are excluded ... Most important of all, there must be progress in solving the fundamental conflicts in the region. Without such progress, technical measures in the nuclear area or on other security problems will hardly be given serious thought ..."
>
> "...
>
> "151. ... A radical transformation, step by step, must be effected in the military and political relationships of the entire area ..."

5. Unfortunately, at this time, several regional States are still in a formal state of war with Israel. Moreover, large regional States such as Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya still refuse to foreswear war as a means of settling disputes and attempt to impede the peace process by means of terror, violent activities and subversion, directly or indirectly.

6. It is also evident that at the present moment, many of the prerequisites necessary for meaningful negotiations on arms control in the Middle East are missing. Until such time when the necessary requirements are met, it is incumbent upon the parties that currently participate in the arms control and regional security process to identify and pursue an agenda that can contribute to the attainment of the desired political climate and thus pave the way to more productive arms control negotiations. These are mainly the currently negotiated confidence- and security-building measures in arms control and regional security and their implementation. Indeed, as stated in the Secretary-General's reports (A/47/387 of 1992 and A/49/324 of 1994), time is still required to arrive at the appropriate conditions that would enable the participants in the peace process to deal with concrete arms control arrangements at the appropriate forum, i.e., the peace process.

7. Therefore, at this sensitive juncture of the peace process in the Middle East, restraint and caution are strongly recommended in order to arrive at greater achievements in the future.

8. It is through its unqualified support for the peace talks and their framework that the General Assembly can make its own contribution to enhancing confidence. Attempts by the United Nations to lift the nuclear issue out of its comprehensive context would be seen as detracting from the sovereignty of the peace talks. Such attempts, in the past, have blocked the road to peaceful

accommodation and might shake the delicate balance achieved through direct negotiations.

9. Israel's bold decisions within the framework of the peace process, the actions it has taken in the context of arms control and regional security, as well as in non-proliferation areas in general, such as signing the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons, participating actively in the negotiations on a comprehensive text-ban treaty and acceding to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, are testimony of its positive approach and substantive contribution to the peace process and the goal of preventing proliferation.